

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Church of God Big Sandy

ChurchofGodBigSandy.com

July 29, 2023 • 1:00 p.m. • Sunset 8:19

### Memorial service today

Our friend . . . . . Sonny Rosenberger  
Date . . . . . Today  
Time . . . . . 12:30 to 1:00 p.m.  
Where . . . . . Church building

### Bible studies

Interactive study—1:10 p.m. . . . . Reg Killingley  
Presentation study—2:00 . . . . . Mark Weiss  
(Also transmitted live)

### Order of service—3:00 p.m.

Song leader . . . . . Mark Weiss  
Pianist . . . . . Dixon Cartwright  
Scripture reading . . . . . Revelation 1:12–20  
Sermon . . . . . Dave Havir

### Quick takes

1. Welcome to traveling speaker—The congregation welcomes Mark Weiss, who will be giving the 2:00 Bible study and will be leading songs during the 3:00 church service.
2. Wednesday-night Bible study this week—Aug. 2
3. Memorial service for David Bonilla—His service is scheduled for Sunday, Aug. 20, at 1:00 p.m. in our church building. A meal will follow.

4. Please remember to pray for the following people who are not able to regularly attend our church service.
 

■ Mickey Ashcraft	■ Ronnie Shirley
■ Timberly Dunnam	■ Elaine Townsend
■ Annette Payne	■ Donna Weese
■ Ruth Roe	
5. Edifying the Body—This week's article is "My Family Came From Soviet Union, Appreciates America's Freedoms" by Karol Markowicz.
6. Among Friends—This week's article is "Parable of the Tares—Part 1" by Dave Havir.
7. Eye on the World—The version of this week's "Eye on the World" that is distributed in the hall is 38 pages. (The number of pages on the website varies slightly due to a different layout program.) This edition has 343 headlines and two articles.

## Prayer updates

Dave Havir apologizes for not gathering the usual number of prayer updates and new prayer requests this week. Those topics are generally gathered on Thursday and Friday, but Mr. Havir had an unusual visiting workload this week (consisting of visiting members of the congregation and citizens in the community). The demand is not slowing down just yet—as he is also scheduled to travel after the church service to a city in Texas to spend time tomorrow with a family in need.

## "Family from U.S.S.R Appreciates America's Freedoms"

This article is from the "Edifying the Body" section of the Church of God Big Sandy's website ([churchofgodbigandy.com](http://churchofgodbigandy.com)). It was posted for the weekend of July 29,

**By Karol Markowicz**

**N**EW YORK, N.Y.—Every year, our family celebrates the day we arrived in America from the Soviet Union. The date our family was free is July 20. It has always been important to me to acknowledge how differently my life could have gone.

Nothing is promised and nothing is guaranteed, but getting to be an American had always filled me with pride and optimism. America is that shining city on a hill, and I have been blessed to inhabit it. I always believed we would overcome any problem we faced through our sheer Americanness. Our founding documents would lead

us. Our common goals would blaze our path forward. We were unstoppable.

This is the first Americaversary I feel somewhat less optimistic.

On Jan. 5, 1967, in his inaugural address as California governor, Ronald Reagan famously said, "Freedom is a fragile thing, and it's never more than one generation away from extinction." That freedom was tested during the pandemic and came out bruised and scarred. We've largely moved on—talking about the abuses suffered (whether it's the poorest children being denied the ability to go to school or people fired for not taking the vaccine) is considered living in the past.

But that recent past is having a damaging effect on our present. Last year, Americans lost trust in everything. A 2022 Gallup poll found a dramatic drop in the way Americans saw their major institutions. It wasn't just the president and Congress: "Five other institutions are at their lowest points in at least three decades of measurement, including the church or organized religion (31 percent), newspapers (16 percent), the criminal justice system (14 percent), big business (14 percent) and the police."

A Gallup survey this month didn't show much improvement. Faith in "14 institutions remains near last year's relatively low level, with none of the scores worsening or improving meaningfully."

It wasn't just pandemic practices. The government conspired with social-media outlets to censor this newspaper's true and correct reporting on the Hunter Biden lap-top to influence the 2020 presidential election. We're expected to pretend people can change their gender—or risk getting fired or arrested.

When Reagan talks of freedom, he doesn't just mean getting to vote on Election Day. I feel this lack of faith acutely, and I worry about what it means for the country I so love. While we focus on our lack of confidence in institutions, we've really lost faith in each other. We preserve our freedom through a cohesive unity we are sorely lacking—indeed, it's been under attack the last few years.

We're not supposed to acknowledge our country's uniqueness. We're not supposed to celebrate our founding. Statues of American heroes like Abraham Lincoln and Theo-

dore Roosevelt are ripped down without a second thought. Columbus Day commemorations are largely diminished. Thanksgiving and the Fourth of July are clearly on the chopping block.

With nothing to connect us, no shared history to celebrate, we're susceptible to the exact loss of freedom Reagan warned of. When we don't trust each other or rely on each other, our country frays.

There's no easy fix. It's not as simple as one election or a change in leadership—though in the case of the divisive Biden administration it would surely help. We have to hold accountable the institutions that have so let us down.

But, more than anything, we must tune out the voices who tell us to hate our country and be ashamed of our history. There is no perfect country, and the one we have is closer than most.

The rest is up to us individually.

- Find your way back to family who have been lost over political disagreement.

- Return to religious and civic institutions and help rebuild them if they have faltered.

- Preserve our collective freedom whenever you can. We have the greatest country in the history of the world to defend.

- Those of us with an Americaversary should celebrate it loud and proud and remember, along with those blessed enough to be born here, how lucky we all are.

That shining city on a hill has times of trouble and we are in those times now. But we have overcome those times before and should have every expectation that we will again.

## Thought for the week

"Be decisive. Right or wrong, make a decision. The road is paved with flat squirrels who couldn't make a decision."

## Thought with a twist

"Trust science. Studies show that, if your parents didn't have children, there's a high probability you won't either."

## “Parable of the Tares—Part 1”

This article is from the “Among Friends” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website (churchofgodbigandy.com). It was posted for the weekend of July 29, 2023.

**By Dave Havir**

**B**IG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I began a two-part series about the parable of the tares (which the Son of God gave in Matthew 13:24-30 and explained in Matthew 13:37-43). In the past, I discussed this parable in only one Bible study, but I decided to stretch the material over two presentations.

Let’s look at when the Son of God originally gave the parable. (In the future, we can review when the Son of God gave an explanation of the parable.)

### What is a parable?

Matthew 13:24—“Another parable He put forth to them, saying . . .”

The Greek word for parable (*parabole*—Strong’s No. 3850) is a noun that means “parable, an illustration that teaches in a story or extended figure of speech; proverb, a short pithy saying.”

### Kingdom of heaven

Matthew 13:24—“The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field.”

Many Bible students are aware of some different wording among the Gospel writers. One such example is the phrase “kingdom of heaven.”

Notice an excerpt from “gotquestions.org” about the kingdom of heaven. It presented: “The phrase ‘kingdom of God’ occurs 68 times in 10 different New Testament books, while ‘kingdom of heaven’ occurs only 32 times—and only in the Gospel of Matthew . . . Mark and Luke used ‘kingdom of God’ where Matthew used ‘kingdom of heaven’ frequently in parallel accounts of the same parable . . . The two phrases refer to the same thing.”

### Enemy sowed weeds

Matthew 13:25—“But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.”

The Greek word for tares (*zizanon*—Strong’s No. 2215) is a noun that means “weed, darnel or some other troublesome weed.”

### Grain and weeds together

Matthew 13:26—“But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.”

In Matthew 13:27-30, the servants of the owner had a discussion with the owner.

Servants: Didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Why does it have weeds?

Owner: An enemy has done this.

Servants: Do you want us to pull the weeds?

Owner: No. If we pull the weeds, we might uproot the wheat with them.

### Good behavior can fool you

Some religious people are so arrogant that they believe that they can automatically and dogmatically identify true believers.

It is absolutely true that religious people should be observant to recognize good behavior (1 Corinthians 2:15 and Hebrews 5:14)

But a religious person who claims to dogmatically label a person’s standing with God is presumptuous.

■ Matthew 7:20—You will ultimately know people by their fruit.

■ Matthew 7:21—Not everyone who sounds religious has a relationship with the Lord.

■ Matthew 7:22-23—Notice some of the characteristics that do not guarantee that a person has a relationship with the Lord—prophesying in the Lord’s name, casting out demons in the Lord’s name and doing many wonders in the Lord’s name.

### Helpful reminder

2 Timothy 2:19—“Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal . . .”

■ “The Lord knows those who are His.”

■ “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”